

Belle: The Slave Daughter and the Lord Chief Justice

Paula Byrne



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From acclaimed biographer Paula Byrne, the sensational true tale that inspired the major motion picture *Belle* (May 2014) starring Tom Wilkinson, Miranda Richardson, Emily Watson, Penelope Wilton, and Matthew Goode—a stunning story of the first mixed-race girl introduced to high society England and raised as a lady.

The illegitimate daughter of a captain in the Royal Navy and an enslaved African woman, Dido Belle was sent to live with her great-uncle, the Earl of Mansfield, one of the most powerful men of the time and a leading opponent of slavery. Growing up in his lavish estate, Dido was raised as a sister and companion to her white cousin, Elizabeth. When a joint portrait of the girls, commissioned by Mansfield, was unveiled, eighteenth-century England was shocked to see a black woman and white woman depicted as equals. Inspired by the painting, *Belle* vividly brings to life this extraordinary woman caught between two worlds, and illuminates the great civil rights question of her age: the fight to end slavery.

Belle includes 20 pages of black-and-white photos.

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