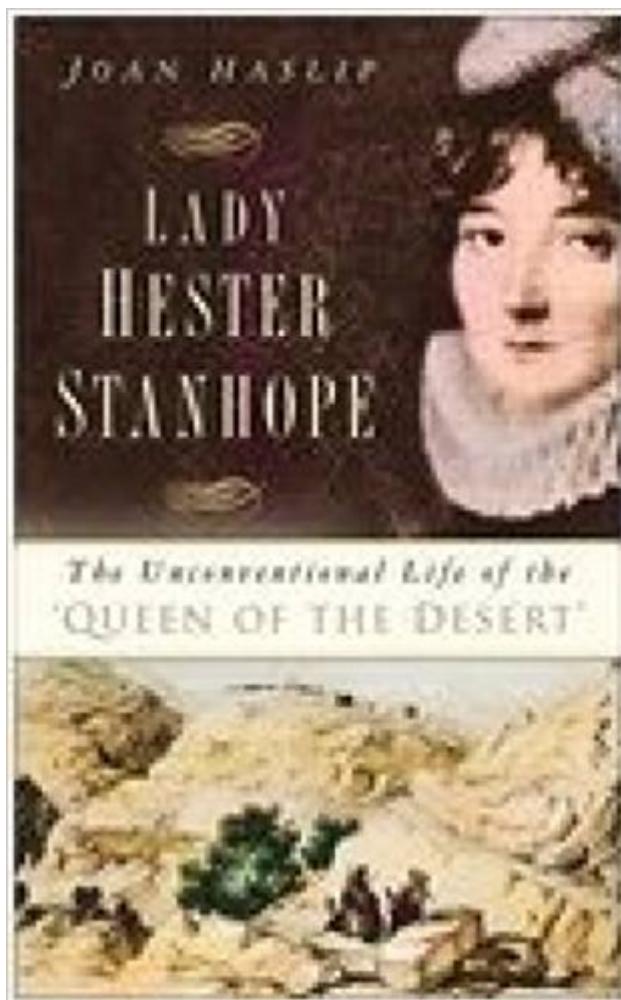


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Lady Hester Stanhope: The Unconventional Life Of The 'Queen Of The Desert'



Synopsis

This is the fantastic true story of Pitt the Younger's niece, Lady Hester Stanhope, who, at the turn of the eighteenth century left her homeland and travelled through Cairo, Jaffa, Damascus, Palmyra - braving bandit-infested territories to visit cities which seldom been seen by Europeans and charming a series of murderous despots. In 1810, after the death of her uncle and that of the man she loved, Hester left England for the east, never to return. She was thirty-three. Her retinue included a private physician and her young lover. In Jaffa, she showed her utter fearlessness for the first but by no means the last time by demanding, and receiving, the protection of the bandit-in-chief when crossing the dangerous countryside to Jerusalem. By the time her caravan approached the foothills of Mount Lebanon, the Englishwoman had largely disappeared. In her place was a mannish figure who wore a species of male oriental clothing, smoked a bubbly narghila, and could swear at her mule drivers in three languages. Joan Haslip's timeless and engaging biography explores the incredible life of a young woman which would be amazing if it happened today and, two centuries ago, was almost unbelievable.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

JOAN HASLIP was born in 1912 and spent her early years in England and Italy. She worked for the London Mercury and was the author of several books including *Out of Focus*, *Grandfather's Steps*, *Parnell*, and *Portrait of Pamela*. She died in 1994.

Lady Hester Stanhope was probably the most interesting woman in England at the turn of the

nineteenth century. She was related to most of the politically influential men of the day and played hostess to her uncle, the Prime Minister Pitt. She was bright, interested in most everything and unwilling to play a differential role. When her uncle died and she was no longer in a position to influence politics, she decided to broaden her horizons by leaving England for first Greece and then the Middle East. She was snobbish, unkind to servants, hypercritical of her social inferiors. She didn't tolerate fools and found most people foolish. She was fiercely protective of people who came to her for help and beggared herself for them. Most of this book is taken from her physician's diaries published after her death, although she corresponded widely, and those letters have been used. This biography was published in 1934. It is lucid and well-written. I have always been curious about this woman as she is frequently mentioned as one of the intrepid Englishwomen who left home for a wider life. I'd give this book five stars except it lacks the two things necessary for a biography - maps and pictures. I thought it was an excellent book about a fascinating person.

Very interesting story

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