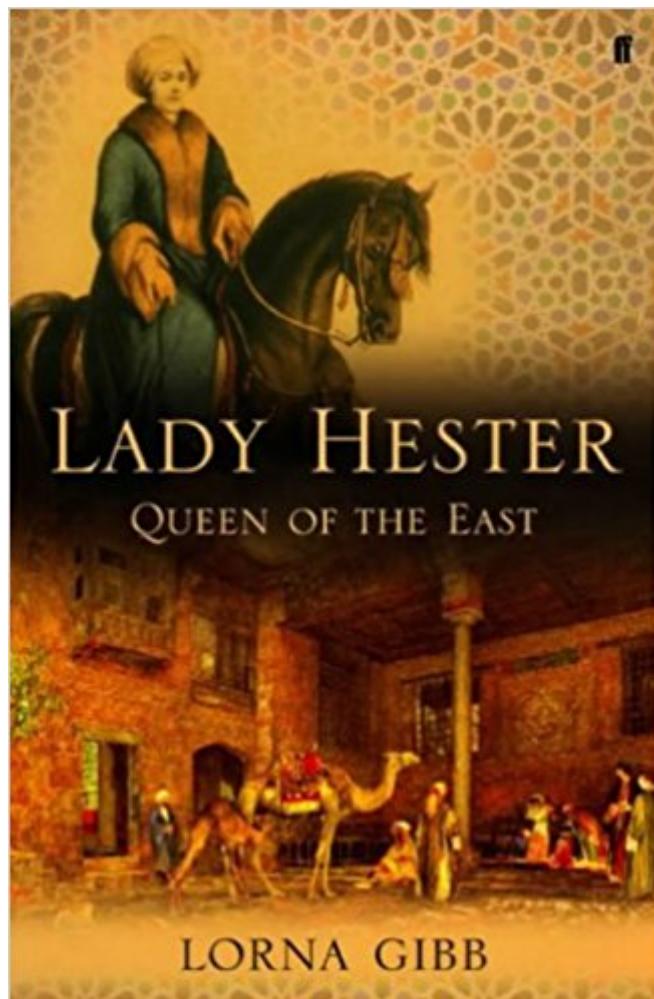


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Lady Hester: Queen Of The East



Synopsis

Born into the age of revolution, Lady Hester Stanhope had a radical spirit. Following the death of her uncle the Prime Minister William Pitt in 1806, she chose the excitement of travel and adventure over the life of a spinster in polite London society. And she never looked back. Surviving a terrible shipwreck and the scorn of Lord Byron ('that dangerous thing - a female wit'), Lady Hester adopted male Arabic dress, became the Queen of the Bedouin and was the first European woman ever to enter Palmyra. Recovering from the heartbreak of a passionate love affair, she became a political force in Lebanon. In defiance of despotic war lords she offered sanctuary to an oppressed minority, creating a fortress which became a focus of both gossip and awe. Told with all the verve of its subject's life, based on much new source material and extensive travel in Hester's footsteps, Lady Hester traces this extraordinary life from Downing Street to an isolated monastery in the hills of Lebanon - a stunning evocation of a unique and pioneering figure.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

"A gripping narrative of a unique woman. Vividly evokes the culture and atmosphere of the East.' Sunday Telegraph 'Flawlessly written.' Frances Wilson, Guardian 'Enthralling... Charts the fate of a radical spirit in a revolutionary age.' Traveller" --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Lorna Gibb grew up in Bellshill, Scotland, and worked as a professional dancer in Italy before studying at London University. She took her PhD at Edinburgh, lectured at Helsinki and Sheffield

University, and was a guest lecturer at the University of Salzburg. She lives in London with her husband. Lady Hester is her first biography.

A predecessor of all those intrepid Englishwomen traipsing through the Middle East alone in the late 19th and early 20th centuries (Gertrude Bell and Freya Stark among my favorites), Lady Hester was a force, and this is a very nicely written work about a complicated, intelligent and headstrong woman who lived a singular life on her own terms. Lorna Gibb presents a deep (but not turgid) history of a woman well versed in politics and diplomacy by virtue of her tutelage under her uncle William Platts' and connections with other elite among British politicians. Not much retiring to the parlor with the other ladies for this one! But, as well, a woman who loved strongly and wrongly and bore her time's judgment of that with strength and aplomb (honestly, there were a couple of times I wanted to grab her by the lapels). And who can't love the fashion sense of someone who adopted Arab male dress, down to the sword in the sash? If you enjoy good tales of fearless women, grab this one and turn off the phone.

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