



The Rose of Martinique: A Life of Napoleon's Josephine

Andrea Stuart

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One of the most remarkable women of the modern era, Josephine Bonaparte was born Rose de Tasher on her family's sugar plantation in Martinique. She embodied all the characteristics of a true Creole—sensitivity, vivacity, and willfulness. Using diaries and letters, Andrea Stuart expertly re-creates Josephine's whirlwind of a life, which began with an isolated Caribbean childhood and led to a marriage that would usher her onto the world stage and crown her empress of France.

Josephine managed to be in the forefront of every important episode of her era's turbulent history: from the rise of the West Indian slave plantations that bankrolled Europe's rapid economic development, to the decaying of the ancien régime, to the French Revolution itself, from which she barely escaped the guillotine. Rescued from near starvation, she grew to epitomize the wild decadence of post-revolutionary Paris. It was there that Josephine first caught the eye of Napoleon Bonaparte. A true partner to Napoleon, she was equal parts political adviser, hostess par excellence, confidante, and passionate lover. In this captivating biography, Stuart brings her so utterly to life that we finally understand why Napoleon's last word before dying was the name he had given her: Josephine.

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