



Josephine: A Life of the Empress

Carolly Erickson

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In 1804, when Josephine Bonaparte knelt before her husband, Napoleon, to receive the imperial diadem, few in the vast crowd of onlookers were aware of the dark secrets hidden behind the imperial façade. To her subjects, she appeared to be the most favored woman in France: alluring, wealthy, and with the devoted love of a remarkable husband who was the conqueror of Europe. In actuality, Josephine's life was far darker, for her celebrated allure was fading, her wealth was compromised by massive debt, and her marriage was corroded by infidelity and abuse.

Josephine's life story was as turbulent as the age—an era of revolution and social upheaval, of the guillotine, and of frenzied hedonism. With telling psychological depth and compelling literary grace, Carolly Erickson brings the complex, charming, ever-resilient Josephine to life in this memorable portrait, one that carries the reader along every twist and turn of the empress's often thorny path, from the sensual richness of her childhood in the tropics to her final lonely days at Malmaison.

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