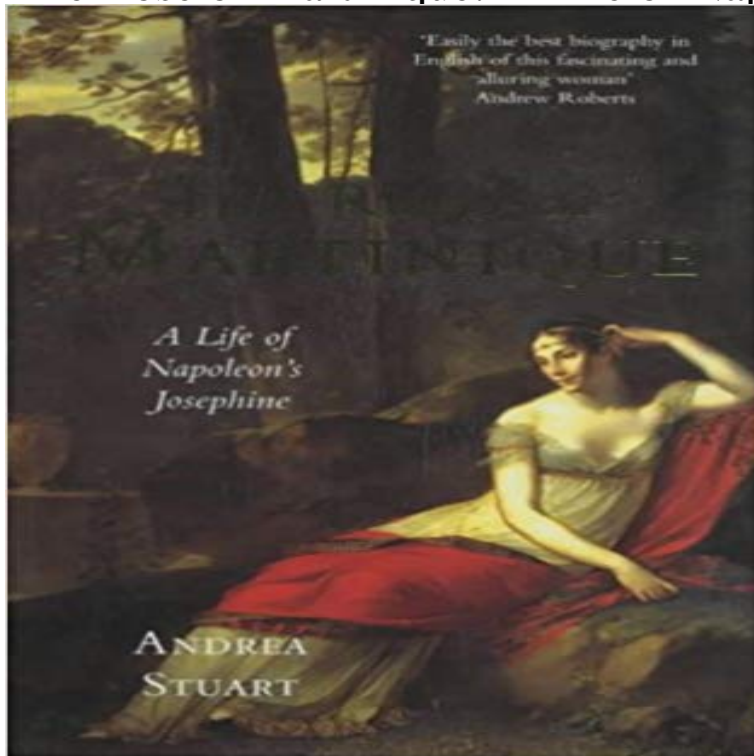


The Rose of Martinique: A Life of Napoleons Josephine



This evocative biography tells the extraordinary story of Josephine Bonaparte. One of the most potent icons of female sexuality, Josephine has largely been reduced to an empty cipher, the butt of one of the oldest jokes around. Her life has been portrayed almost entirely in connection with Napoleon, but that relationship was only a tiny fraction of the life she led as a Caribbean woman in the salons of 18th-century Paris. Sharing with her subject a Caribbean background, Andrea Stuart offers an insight into the world which Josephine left as a plump schoolgirl for Paris and marriage to her cousin Viscount Alexandre Beauharnais. Expecting an exotic Creole bride, Beauharnais set about a radical transformation and the dowdy teenager soon became a sophisticated sensual beauty, the darling of the pre-revolutionary salons. As the revolution reached its endgame, Josephine, now widowed with two small children, met her Emperor and the rest, as they say, is history.

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