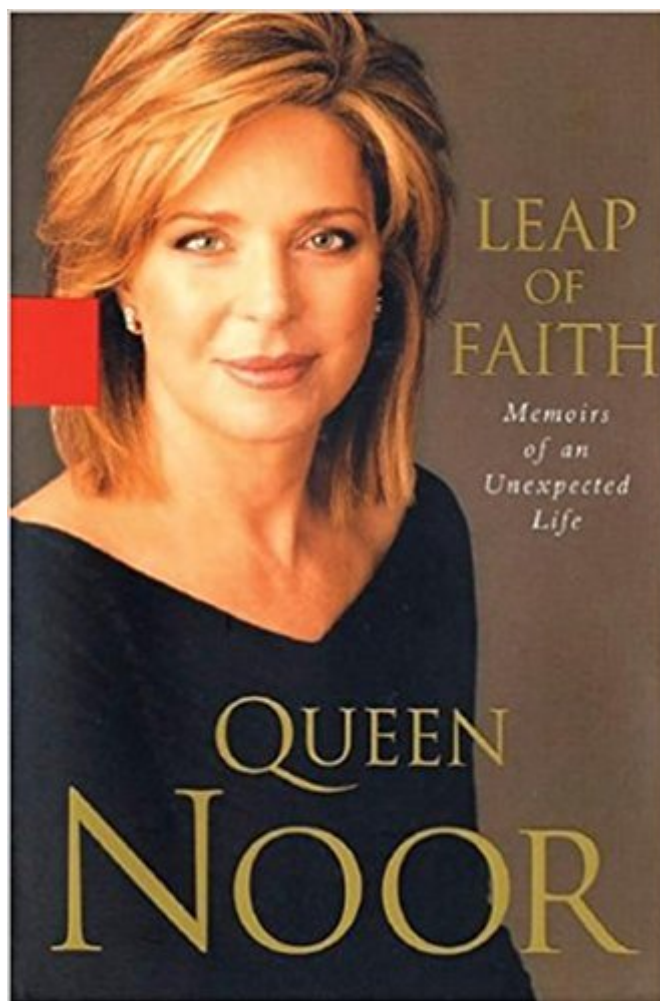


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Leap Of Faith: Memoirs Of An Unexpected Life



Synopsis

Born in 1951 to a distinguished Arab-American family, Lisa Najeeb Halaby became the fourth wife of King Hussein at age 27. With her husband being not only Jordan's monarch but the spiritual leader of all Muslims, Lisa was unsure what her role would be. This moving memoir provides a timely look at one woman's story against a backdrop of 30 turbulent years: the displacement of over 1 million Palestinians by the creation of Israel, King Hussein's frustrated efforts for peace, and the effect of Saddam Hussein and the Gulf War on Jordan and the royal family. Queen Noor offers intimate new glimpses of King Hussein, Saddam Hussein, Queen Elizabeth, Arafat, and many other world leaders.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Anyone who loved *The King and I* will readily warm to the love story of Queen Noor and the late King Hussein of Jordan. Born in America in 1951 as Lisa Halaby, Noor came from a wealthy, well-connected family and was part of Princeton's first co-ed class. Her father's aviation business produced a chance meeting with King Hussein in 1976, and a year or two later Noor realized the king was courting her. He was 41, she was 26. The rumor mills buzzed: was she the next Grace Kelly? Before long, the king renamed her Noor (light in Arabic), and she converted to Islam. They were married in the summer of 1978. From this point on, her story is mostly his, mainly covering his attempts to broker peace in the Middle East. There are meetings with Arafat, Saddam Hussein, American presidents and other leaders. Noor details Hussein's struggles to create Arab unity and his vision of peaceful coexistence with Israel. Her own activities developing village-based economic

self-sufficiency projects and improving Jordan's medical, educational and cultural facilities take second place to her husband's struggles on the world stage. And while she occasionally acknowledges her domestic difficulties, Noor is careful not to allow personal problems to become any more than asides. Her pleasing memoir ends with the king's death after his struggle with cancer, although readers may suspect that this smart, courageous woman will remain a world presence for years to come. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

The word unexpected in the book's subtitle refers to the fact that this American-born, Princeton-educated woman was in the beginning stages of a career in urban planning when, rather suddenly, she married the much older and thrice-married king of Jordan. Queen Noor offers a vastly informative and even fascinating memoir of her life from her childhood in an Arab American family, daughter of a very successful man in politics and business (including a stint as director of the Federal Aviation Administration), to her tenure as consort of the charismatic King Hussein, who died in 1999 of cancer. Her Majesty naturally adopts a Jordanian perspective in her reminiscences; we are not surprised when she posits, for instance, that "Jews, Muslims, and Christians had lived peacefully in the Middle East and indeed in Palestine for centuries. It was not until the rise of Zionism and the creation of Israel that animosities took root." As the woman who stood behind one of the major players in the Middle East in the second half of the twentieth century, Queen Noor brings a unique perspective to the contemporary history of the region. With this book's release, the articulate, engaging and photogenic author will undoubtedly be on the talk-show circuit, so librarians should be prepared for demand. Brad Hooper Copyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

I am always asking, "what did the author edit?" She wants her husband and her adopted country to look the best in this book. Since the book has ended, she spends most of her time in England.....Times and politics change, so Queen Noor is not in favor as she was once. The memoirs were well written, but a timeline of events and a map would have helped me understand the region and the events of which she was writing.

Very interesting description of her unique life - and a quick read

Somewhat of a misnomer. Only a few pages are about the Queen. Most of it is a hagiography of

King Hussein. If pitched as such, I'd buy a lot more.

Only got glimpses of her personal life. She repeatedly writes about all the different meetings with the leaders around the globe, but gives no real information on anything.

"Leap of Faith" was a very pleasant surprise to this reviewer. I picked it up because my wife enjoyed the story, half expecting a mushy "girl" tale. To describe LOF in that fashion is inaccurate, derogatory to the authoress and unfair to females in general. Queen Noor was born Lisa Halaby, an American of Swedish/Arabic descent. She went to the best schools, was well traveled. She was no ingenue. Lisa was working in the Middle East when she met the then recently divorced King of Jordan. LOF details the Queen's life after her 1978 marriage until the King's death from cancer in 1999. It must have been terribly difficult for an American woman, even one with Arabic father, to adjust to a new life. She was a highly public figure in a strange land, a stepmother to children from 2 previous marriages and wed to a man who was quite "occupied" with the affairs of state. Noor skillfully alludes to these problems without dwelling on them or glossing them over. She presents herself as both a sincere, independent woman but a loyal wife as well. The strongest point to LOF is its' perspective on the Israel/ Palestine conflict. Let there be no doubt! Readers get the Muslim viewpoint here! The Queen is not a neutral observer-nor should she be! Noor was an Arabic monarch and makes no apologies, not that any are due. Noor plainly sees her late husband as an under appreciated moderate, constantly striving for peace. The Queen firmly and fervently makes the case that Israel is the aggressor in the Middle East, has seized far too much Palestinian land and that her leaders (the late Mr. Rabin excepted) are not interested in peace. She takes dead aim at Messrs. Begin and Netanyahu. Virtually every reviewer who gave LOF low rankings seized this point to criticize LOF. This reviewer takes the Queens' side for 3 reasons: 1) She may be correct. 2) Americans need to be exposed to the Arabic view. The Israeli slant is far too dominant in the USA. Pat Buchanan has labeled this condition the "Amen Corner". 3) LOF is not history. It is a highly personal memoir from an Arab-American uniquely situated in the heart of the conflict. (Credit to previous reviewer "Darleen" on that vital point). LOF has 2 minor weak points: 1) It recounts too much travel, too much coming and going. There are too many high level receptions and state visits. Granted, Noor was a busy woman but too much ink is devoted to these activities. 2) We don't find out what happened to her after her husband died! Is she still Queen? Is she back in the States? How did her husband's succession play out? What are her plans for the future? She is still a relatively young woman! She still has much to offer the world. Since portions of LOF are so

intense, this reviewer hated to see the story end so vaguely. This reviewer's minor criticisms or those of others on the Arabic/Israeli conflict should deter no one from reading LOF. This is a fine story of a smart and sensitive lady who chose a difficult and challenging path for herself. She performed a diplomatic balancing act extremely well. She and her biography deserve respect

Queen Noor is inspiring. The book (because it is so interesting) leaves the reader wanting to know more about her, the Royal family, Jordan, and the Middle East. However, Queen Noor is easily the most fascinating figure in this story and I'm so glad she wrote her story now, not later as she contemplated. After reading the entire book, the only criticism I had was that she compared the American GOVERNMENT'S views with European CITIZENS' views (concluding that Americans are more narrow minded about the situation with Israel). My reaction was that she should compare governments with governments and people with people. Although our government is pro-Israel to an extreme, I think most of the general citizens believe our government should be neutral (just as the European citizens believe). However, we never have any political candidates who stand on that platform. Anyway, I'm sure it was an unintentional mis-comparison and though it struck a nerve, this was a good read. The reviewers who say she does not open up enough (in my view) miss the point of her reserved character, the Muslim honor and privacy belief system, and Noor's dignity. For goodness sake, she even said she almost never held hands with her husband in public. Why would she disgrace her family honor now by publishing a tell-all book? Instead, she showed her intelligence, but also her respect for her husband, family, and country. I agree her politics are slanted to her view (and to her country's view) but face it, it's her book.

Way too wordy and definitely biased!

Interesting to get the Arab point of view on the Middle East. Queen Noor is about my age, so I remember a lot of what she writes about happening during the 60s and 70s. Nicely written and an easy read.

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