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Desert Queen: The Extraordinary Life of Gertrude Bell: Adventurer, Adviser to Kings, Ally of Lawrence of Arabia

Janet Wallach

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Turning away from the privileged world of the "eminent Victorians," Gertrude Bell (1868—1926) explored, mapped, and excavated the world of the Arabs. Recruited by British intelligence during World War I, she played a crucial role in obtaining the loyalty of Arab leaders, and her connections and information provided the brains to match T. E. Lawrence's brawn. After the war, she played a major role in creating the modern Middle East and was, at the time, considered the most powerful woman in the British Empire.

In this masterful biography, Janet Wallach shows us the woman behind these achievements–a woman whose passion and defiant independence were at odds wit the confined and custom-bound England she left behind. Too long eclipsed by Lawrence, Gertrude Bell emerges at last in her own right as a vital player on the stage of modern history, and as a woman whose life was both a heartbreaking story and a grand adventure.

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