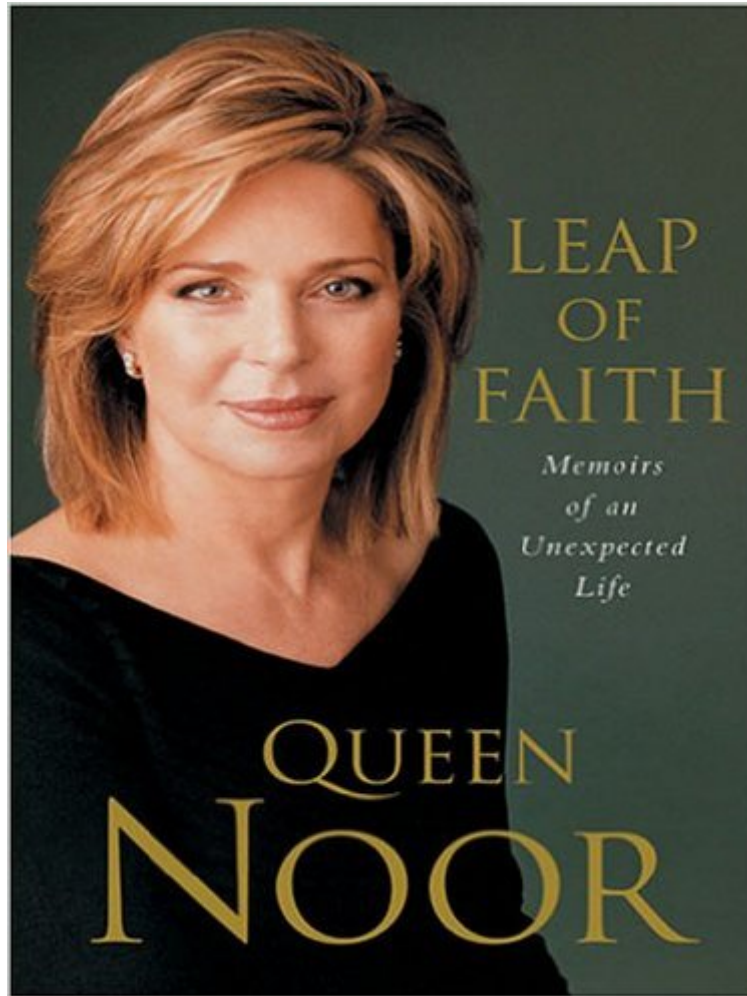


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Leap Of Faith: Memoirs Of An Unexpected Life



Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller The dramatic and inspiring story of an American woman's remarkable journey into the heart of a man and his nation. In 1976, while visiting her father in Jordan, Lisa Halaby was casually introduced on the airport runway to King Hussein. Widely admired in the Arab world as a voice of moderation, and for his direct lineage to the prophet Muhammad, Hussein would soon become the world's most eligible bachelor after the tragic death of his wife. The next time they met, Hussein would fall headlong in love with the athletic, outspoken daughter of his longtime friend. After a whirlwind, secret courtship, Lisa Halaby became Noor Al Hussein, Queen of Jordan. This is the story of a young American woman who became wife and partner to an Arab monarch. It provides a compelling portrait of the late King Hussein and his lifelong effort to bring peace to his war-torn region, and an insider's view of the growing gulf between the United States and the Arab nations. It is also the refreshingly candid story of a mother coming to terms with the demands the king's role as a world statesman placed on her family's private life. But most of all it is a love story - the intimate account of a woman who lost her heart to a king, and to his people.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is a book that had to be written and should be read. It is clearly aimed at the average American audience because it outlines a prespective of the Middle East that U.S. readers have been deprived of. And it might perhaps partially answer the common question that has been frequently asked in America since 9/11: "Why do they hate us?" Queen Noor's book is written in simple form and is an

easy read, whereby she touches upon her own personal experience as King Hussein's wife, step-mother to his many children, as mother, and of course, as the American queen of an Arab country. I found her private political discussions with her late husband as the most fascinating and she reveals, for the first time, some "inside information" throughout the various crises facing Jordan and the region. However, the queen was clearly careful in not revealing enough and many questions remained unanswered, be they political or personal, and sometimes jumps from one issue to the next without clarifying what happened next or how a certain problem was eventually resolved. She does not divulge details of her relationship with her older step-children, especially the now King Abdullah, her husband's eldest son who was suddenly named heir to the throne shortly before Hussein's death. She clearly did not want to ruffle any feathers through her cautious accounts -- after all, she is still officially a Jordanian queen -- but wanted to dedicate this book to portraying her husband's long search for peace in the Middle East. As for some of the reviews here, criticism of the book and writer as "anti-semitic" is ludicrous, and simply proves one of her points in the book on extremist Jews being "planted" to sabotage her message or any other Arab message meant to reach U.S. ears.

"Leap of Faith" can be deceiving. At first you think: cool upper middle class blonde marries much older (and shorter) King. Ah, a late 20th century Grace Kelly? An American Princess Diana? Far from it. Queen Noor, who began her life as Lisa Halaby, is and always has been a serious, thoughtful woman who chooses to live her life for politics, philosophy, her family (both her one of origin and by marriage), and causes. She does not and appears to have never been a woman consumed by clothes, jewelry, gossip, and glamour. (Though some of her detractors might argue differently.) This book traces her beginnings in the upper middle and upper classes of American society. Her father, Najeeb Halaby, was a very successful Arab American who at various times ran the FAA and Pan Am. Her mother was of Swedish American descent. While Lisa/Noor appears to have inherited the looks of her Nordic ancestors, she clearly embraced her Arab American heritage far more enthusiastically as a child. Lisa, as she was then known, grew up in affluent sections of LA, Washington, DC, and New York. She was educated at the finest schools--Westlake, National Cathedral School, Chapin and Concord Academy--and was a strong student and outstanding athlete (captain of the field hockey team). She took her studies and the politics of the 1960's very seriously and insisted on transferring from the apolitical Chapin to the more academically challenging Concord Academy. Eventually she lands at Princeton, in the first female class. After she receives a degree in urban planning, she moves from one international job to another and finally lands at an

architecture firm in Jordan. And the rest, as they say, is history.

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