



The Queen of Whale Cay: The Eccentric Story of "Joe" Carstairs, Fastest Woman on Water

Kate Summerscale

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When Marion "Joe" Carstairs died in 1993 at the age of ninety-three, she was largely forgotten. During the 1920s she held the world record as the fastest female speedboat racer. But as journalist Kate Summerscale discovered, when researching an obituary for the Daily Telegraph, Carstairs was also a notorious cross-dresser who favored women and smoked cheroots. Supremely self-confident, she inherited a Standard Oil fortune and knew how to spend her money--on fast boats and cars, female lovers, and a Caribbean island, Whale Cay, where she reigned over a colony of Bahamians. There, far from her bohemian past in London and Paris, she hosted a succession of girlfriends and celebrities, including Marlene Dietrich and the Duke and Duchess of Windsor. Through it all, she remained devoted to Lord Tod Wadley, a little doll who became her bosom companion. Already a bestseller in England, *The Queen of Whale Cay* is a marvelous portrait of one of the twentieth century's great eccentrics.

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