



The Red Earl: The Extraordinary Life of the 16th Earl of Huntingdon

Selina Hastings

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In *The Red Earl* Selina Hastings tells the extraordinary story of her father, Jack Hastings, 16th Earl of Huntingdon. In 1925, Hastings infuriated his ultra-conservative parents by turning his back on centuries of tradition to make a scandalous run-away marriage. With his beautiful Italian wife he then left England for the other side of the world, further enraging his family by determining on a career as a painter.

The couple settled first in Australia, then on the island of Moorea in the South Pacific. Here, they led an idyllic existence until a bizarre accident forced them to leave the tropics forever. En route back to England, they stopped for a year in California, where Hastings continued to paint while enjoying a glamorous social life with actors such as Charlie Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks.

While in San Francisco, Hastings met the great Mexican artist Diego Rivera, and persuaded him to take him on as an assistant. For the next nearly four years he lived at close quarters with Rivera and with his wife, Frida Kahlo, first in San Francisco, then Detroit, and finally Mexico City. When eventually Hastings returned home it was to be faced with fighting on all fronts: in Spain during the Civil War; in England with his parents; and lastly with his wife, determined to keep him locked into a marriage from which by now he was desperate to escape.

This enthralling story, superbly well written, not only gives a new perspective on two of the 20th-century's greatest artists, Rivera and Kahlo, but also reveals in fascinating detail the private life of an aristocratic family of 100 years ago.

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