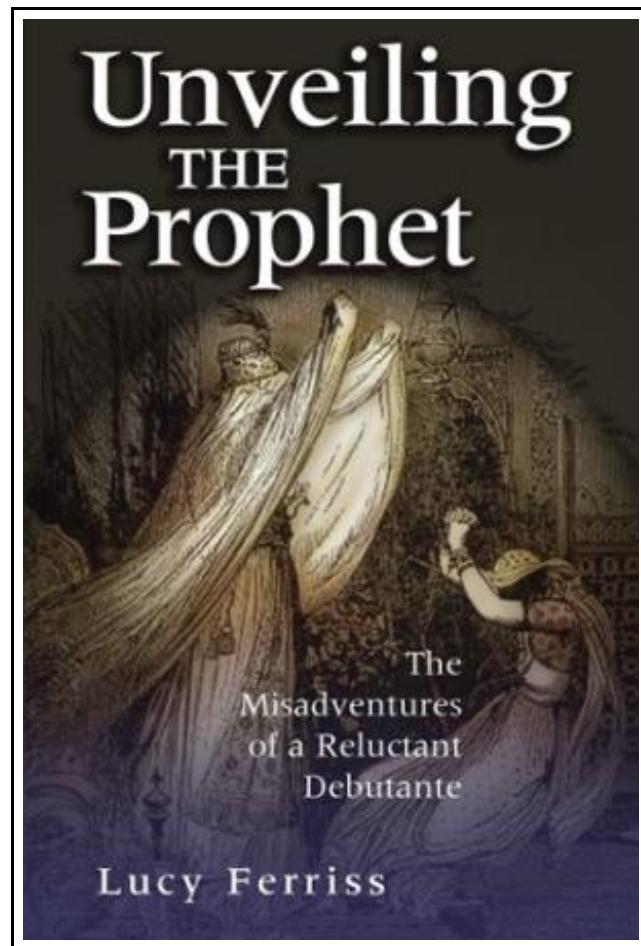


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UNVEILING THE PROPHET: THE MISADVENTURE OF A RELUCTANT DEBUTANTE

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University of Missouri Press. Paperback. Book Condition: new. BRAND NEW, Unveiling the Prophet: The Misadventure of a Reluctant Debutante, Lucy Ferriss, In the autumn of 1972, Lucy Ferriss, then a young coed from a prominent St Louis family, was preparing for the Veiled Prophet Ball at which she was to be presented to society. Once the largest cotillion in the country, the invitation-only ball was unique among society events not only for the legend and mystery surrounding its namesake but also for its setting in a public, taxpayer-funded arena and for its accompanying parade. In the late sixties and early seventies, with racial tensions at a boiling point and urban renewal failing, the exclusively white male Christian membership of the Veiled Prophet Society and the Veiled Prophet's costume - eerily reminiscent of a Klansman's - attracted the ire of ACTION, a militant civil rights group. Before the 1972 ball, ACTION founder Percy Green, himself a native St Louisan, sent letters inviting all of the debutantes to join in the protest: "ACTION understands that you hate being part of this upcoming white racist Veiled Prophet Ball as we hate you being forced to participate by your parents." The letter didn't persuade Ferriss, who felt she owed it to her father to participate. She wrote back: "Don't you have bigger fish to fry? This is just a stupid party. We are slaughtering people in Southeast Asia. Let this one go. It will fall of its own weight." But ACTION did not let this one go. On the night of the ball, as Ferriss bowed in obeisance to the crowd and took her place on the stage, a woman swooped down onto the stage and knocked off the Veiled Prophet's hat and veil, revealing his identity. In the era of monumental Vietnam War...

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