

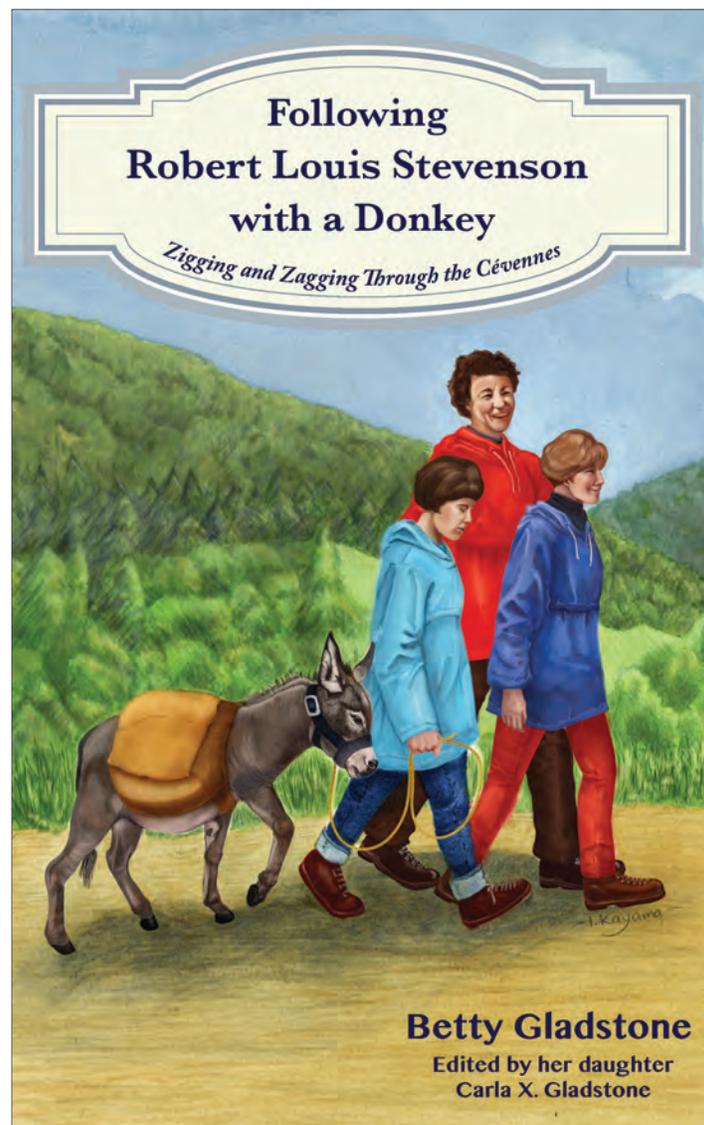


Media Kit

Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey

Zigging and Zagging Through the Cévennes

by
Betty Gladstone

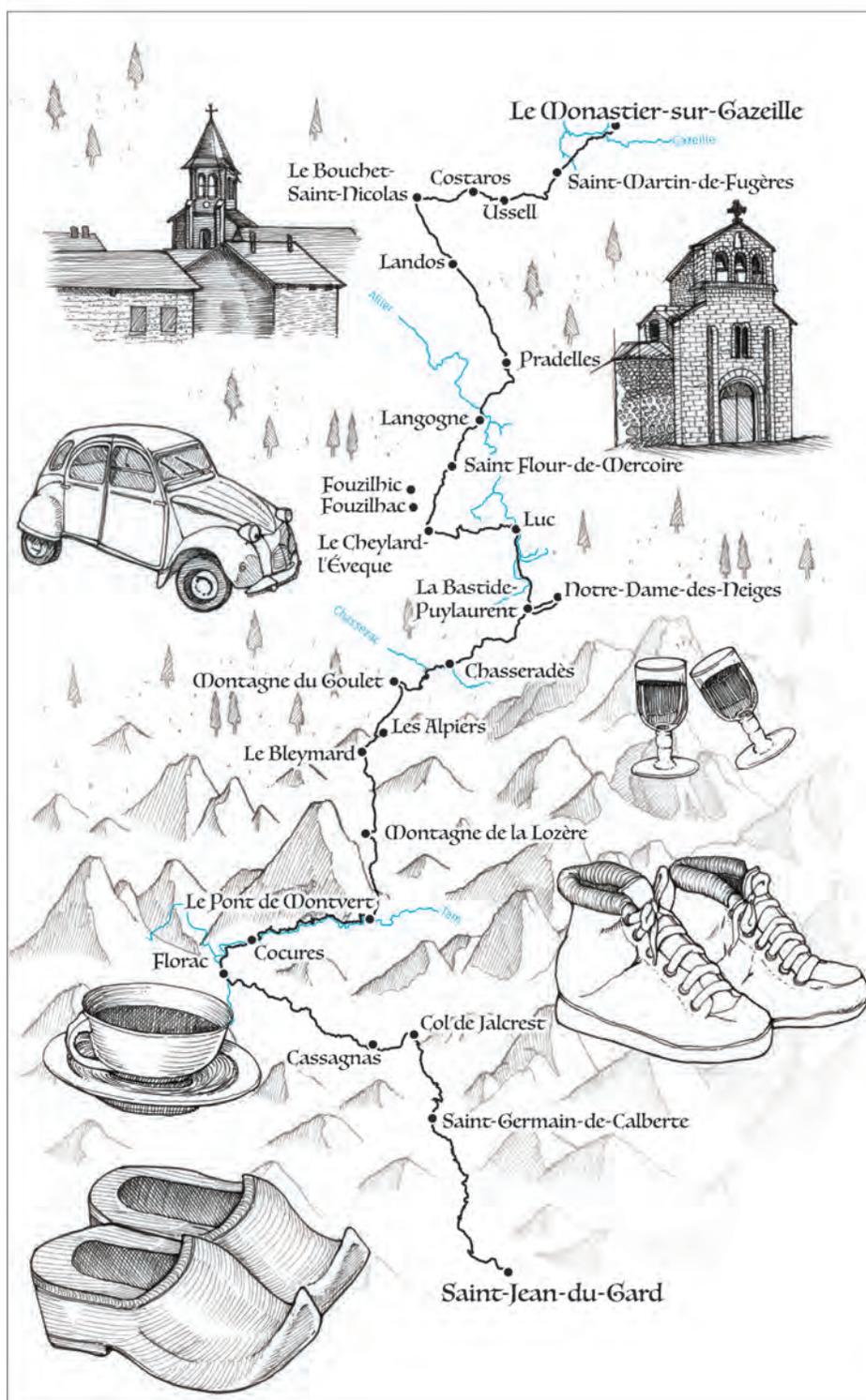


Contents

PRESS RELEASE.....3

CATALOG SHEET5

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS7



Press Release

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DAUGHTER DISCOVERS MOTHER'S MEMOIR OF NEWS- MAKING TRIP TO FRANCE

“International Media Covers Dedication of Robert Louis Stevenson Monument Erected by 1960s Mom”

“I sought, but never did find, my mother’s diary,” Carla Gladstone relates in the foreword to Betty Gladstone’s memoir, *Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey: Zigging and Zagging Through the Cévennes*. “What I found instead was a . . . day-by-day narrative of thirteen days in May 1963 when my mother, sister, and I walked one hundred and thirty-five miles through the mountains of southern France.”

Published December 14, 2017, *Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey* bewitches both adults and young adults whether or not they’re interested in Stevenson. Gladstone’s account of the adventure and its challenging circumstances appeals to everyone who wishes they could pursue a dream no matter what.

Fascinated by Robert Louis Stevenson from childhood, Betty Gladstone recreated the trek with, just like Stevenson, a donkey named Modestine and, unlike Stevenson, her 18- and 12-year-old daughters. What’s amazing is none of them knew the language, and they stayed in barns and small hotels with questionable facilities in an impoverished section of France. Betty Gladstone’s memoir is the tale of that improbable journey and the lifelong friends she made on the way.

In the afterword, Carla Gladstone chronicles the heart-warming aftermath in which her mother erected a monument to Robert Louis Stevenson in Le Monastier with a town-wide celebration that achieved international press coverage. Media included the *Associated Press*, the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *The Scotman*, and *Le Figaro*.

“She was a force to be reckoned with,” Carla Gladstone says in admiration of her mother. “She didn’t just get ideas—she made them happen.”

“Years earlier,” she recalls, “my mother organized a camping trip for our family despite my father’s lack of interest in camping. He later wrote to family and friends, ‘Betty’s organization and foresight was amazing. That I should have been a participant in this kind of expedition exceeds anything I could have predicted and is a tribute . . . to Betty’s farsightedness, guile, and determination.’”

“My mother was an extraordinary person who thought of herself as a very ordinary person,” Carla Gladstone says, “All this planning, organizing, and putting ducks in a row came naturally to her.”

Betty Gladstone, who was born in 1919 in New York City, grew up in Scarsdale, NY. She earned a B.A. degree in psychology at the University of California at Berkeley. She administered health plan memberships for Kaiser and was active in the League of Women Voters. After 1965 she lived in France, then England, where she helped run a housing trust that rehabilitated old houses to create homes for low-income families. In 1979 she and her second husband returned to the United States for retirement in Santa Fe, New Mexico. She became an avid supporter of the Santa Fe Opera company, conducting back stage tours and soliciting local merchants for donations to fundraisers. Despite her lack of experience in retail, she was instrumental in opening a gift shop in the Opera complex to benefit the company. She died in Santa Fe in 1990.

Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey: Zigging and Zagging Through the Cévennes is available as a paperback (ISBN 978-0-9860882-8-5, 146 pages) for \$12.99 and as an ebook (ISBN 978-0-9860882-6-1) for \$4.99.

For more information about this book or to schedule an interview with Carla Gladstone, Betty Gladstone's daughter, who edited the book, contact Denise Timpko, President, Gettier Group, LLC, at 703-723-3005 or denisetimpko@verizon.net. A high-resolution file for the cover and a photograph of the author may be found at <http://www.gettiergroup.net>.

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Catalog Sheet

- **Title:** *Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey: Zigging and Zagging Through the Cévennes*
- **Author:** Betty Gladstone
- **Editor:** Carla X. Gladstone
- **Cover Art and Interior Illustrations:** Ikumi Kayama
- **Book Description:** Most mothers in 1963 didn't set out on a journey with their daughters through an impoverished section of France with little knowledge of the language. But Betty Gladstone did and ended up being the toast of Le Monastier, France, where she is remembered to this day.

Fascinated by Robert Louis Stevenson from her childhood, Betty recreated Stevenson's 135-mile trek through the Cévennes Mountains in 13 days. Accompanied by her daughters and Modestine, a donkey named after Stevenson's beast of burden, they walked the author's original path and slept in barns and in small hotels with questionable facilities.

Betty Gladstone's memoir, *Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey: Zigging and Zagging Through the Cévennes*, is the tale of her improbable journey and the lifelong friends she made on the way. In an afterword, her younger daughter, who edited the book, chronicles the heart-warming aftermath in which Betty erected a monument to Robert Louis Stevenson in Le Monastier with a town-wide celebration that achieved international press coverage.

- **Audience:** Adult
- **Genre:** Memoir
- **Unique Selling Points:**
 - Recreates Robert Louis Stevenson's walking trip with a donkey through the Cévennes Mountains in France documented in his book *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes*
 - Features strong, independent mother pursuing and sharing her life's dream with her daughters
 - Features creation and celebration of monument to Robert Louis Stevenson in Le Monastier
 - Presents information of interest to both adults and young adults
 - Includes an index

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- **Formats and Availability**

- Trade paperback

- **Price:** \$12.99
- **Product Dimensions:** 6 x 9 inches
- **Number of Pages:** 146
- **ISBN:** 978-0-9860882-8-5
- **Publication Date:** December 14, 2017
- **Availability:** Amazon (Ingram, Barnes & Noble, others forthcoming)

- Ebook

- **Price:** \$4.49
- **File Size:** 4384 Kb
- **ISBN:** 978-0-9860882-6-1
- **Publication Date:** December 14, 2017
- **Availability:** Kindle (Nook and iPubs forthcoming)

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Questions and Answers

Carla X. Gladstone, the editor of *Following Robert Louis Stevenson with a Donkey*, answers questions about her mother's book.

How did you find your mother's manuscript?

I was looking through a box of my mother's things hoping to find the diary she had kept for the nine months we spent driving through Europe. There was a folder I didn't remember having seen before. That was the manuscript.

Was her intention to publish it?

She never discussed it with me. The book is definitely written for a general audience, not just our family, so I assume she intended to publish.

What was the reaction of her friends after the trip?

They were impressed, but not really surprised. They knew that when she set her mind on something, she generally found a way to make it happen.

What did you enjoy or dislike about the trip?

I liked most of the walking—I've always enjoyed the outdoors. I liked the donkey and spent a lot of time with her when my mother and sister were talking to people. I wasn't as outgoing or sociable as they were and did not enjoy trying to speak French. I didn't like the taste of wine so I wasn't happy when I was supposed to drink it.

Would you walk the trail again?

I won't rule it out, but it would require lots of planning (I'm my mother's daughter, after all) and the right companion or companions.

What was the most challenging part of the trip for you and why?

My biggest challenge was being a focus of people's attention. At the age of twelve I just wanted people to leave me alone.

What did your sister think about the trip? Did you discuss it later?

We didn't discuss it much. Years later, while she and I were camping, we had some awkward situations we agreed were not as difficult as the night we arrived in Cheylard l'Eveque.

Why did your mom move to Le Monastier?

She was divorced and was at a loose end. The people there were very kind to her, almost protective. She could leave her old life behind and regain her bearings.

What are your plans for the book?

First, I want people to be amused! Some parts of my mother's book make me think of *Three Men in a Boat* by Jerome K. Jerome updated to "Three Women on the Mountains" (to say nothing of the donkey). Second, I hope that my mother's example will give readers the courage to pursue their own special adventure.

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How do you think members of the Robert Louis Stevenson Society or other RLS groups will react to this book?

It may prompt them to reread the original *Travels with a Donkey in the Cévennes* by Robert Louis Stevenson. Perhaps they will look up Stevenson's rejected first chapter about Le Monastier sur Gazeille, subsequently published as an essay: "A Mountain Town in France—A Fragment." It contains the observation that "every urchin seemed to know my name, although no living creature could pronounce it." Eighty-five years later, no one could pronounce "Gladstone" either.

How can readers reach you?

Readers can reach me through my blog, "Following Robert Louis Stevenson," at at <http://followingstevenson.blogspot.com/>.

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