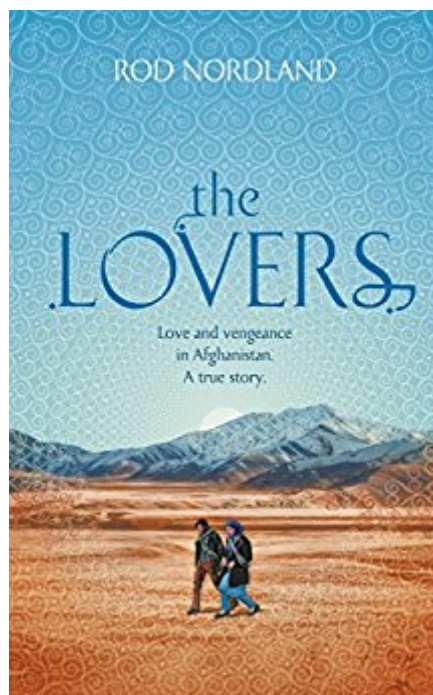


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The Lovers



Synopsis

A riveting, real-life equivalent of *The Kite Runner*-an astonishingly powerful and profoundly moving story of a young couple willing to risk everything for love that puts a human face on the ongoing debate about women's rights in the Muslim world. "She is his Juliet and he is her Romeo, and her family has threatened to kill them both..." This is the heartrending account of Zakia and Mohammad Ali, a couple from opposing Islamic sects, who defying their society's norms have left behind everything they know and are quite literally risking their lives for their love. She is a Sunni, he is a Shia, but as friends from childhood Zakia and Mohammad Ali could never have predicted that their love would anger their families so much that they would be forced to leave their homes finding refuge in the harsh terrain of the Afghani mountains. Without money or passports they rely on the kindness of strangers to house them for a couple of days at a time as they remain on the run, never deterred. New York Times journalist, Rod Nordland, has chronicled the plight of the young lovers telling their extraordinary story of courage, perseverance and love in one of the world's most troubled countries. This moving love story is told against the bigger backdrop of the horrific but widespread practices that women are subjected to in Afghanistan.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I began this book early in the evening, and couldn't put it down until well after midnight, until my kindle battery finally died. The story of this romance reads like a thriller, rendered with a wealth of detail that makes it compelling, vivid and immediate. This is the story of a forbidden love match in a society where marriages are carefully arranged by families. It reveals a world in which women are the property of fathers, husbands, and brothers, who answer the women's desire of individual autonomy with the "honor" killings reserved for women who have transgressed this patriarchal code. It reveals the obstacles faced not just by one Afghan woman, but all Afghan women, and any Afghans who do not conform to a male-dominated tribal society that has proven fertile kindling for extremism. As Nordland peels away the layers of this world, recounting romantic Afghan poetry, folk tales, and social attitudes, he reveals an awakening struggle against coercive "cultural" practices that eclipse any new laws put into place to prevent such things as the marriage of child brides to older men, stonings of women who speak to a man surreptitiously by cell phone--and the punishment of errant couples like these lovers. The author offers up some very interesting less-reported nuggets of history. Such as his conclusion, after many years of reporting in Afghanistan, that the Afghan mujahideen's resistance to Communism was fueled in great part by the Soviet attempt to elevate the status of women. In his view: "At its heart the jihad was not a response to Communism, it was holy war against feminism. In the narrow worldview of Afghanistan's jihadis, Communism and feminism were synonymous." If this is true, then why haven't we heard more about it, from reporters, who sometimes glamorized the mujahideen back in the 1980s, and American policymakers, who supported them? These historic tidbits alone are worth the price of admission. This is a meticulously reported account by one of the rare reporters who covers the status of women, not as an obscure subplot, but with urgency, as if it were important to the destiny of a country, or a region. (In one of Nordland's New York Times stories, an Afghan senator tells him women must be allowed to participate in the country's peace talks, "because women want peace more than men do.") This book is also an interesting meditation on the the social forces that conspire against individualism and autonomy in many traditional societies. It is a must read for anyone who wants to understand this region, and any place in the world where the strictures imposed on one sector of the population have the power to hold back entire countries.

a must read about women's rights in Afghanistan.

It was a difficult read for me because of the writing style. It felt like I was reading a very long news story. However the story itself was an important one and I'm very glad I read it!

Gripping story hard to believe marrying for love is not acceptable and women are held in such a low and despicable regard. This book moved me on many levels would highly recommend.

Gives the reader a good look into what life is like in Afghanistan. I enjoyed reading it.

I couldn't put down the love story of Ali and Zakia. This book not only tells the story of forbidden and dangerous love but also gives an understanding of life for women in Afghanistan.

Very interesting and insightful story.

Can I give it six stars??? The story is a page turner from the opening paragraph. The author has managed to write a beautiful story about love and what's important in life while providing such a compassionate awareness for a disease we only associate with the withered elderly. The manner by which she delivers such a rich story, taking readers back and forth in time, is surprisingly effective and engrossing. I read this book in three nights, looking forward a day to getting back to characters that had become so real to me. I cried at the end. I didn't want to say goodbye either (read the book and you'll know what I mean).

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