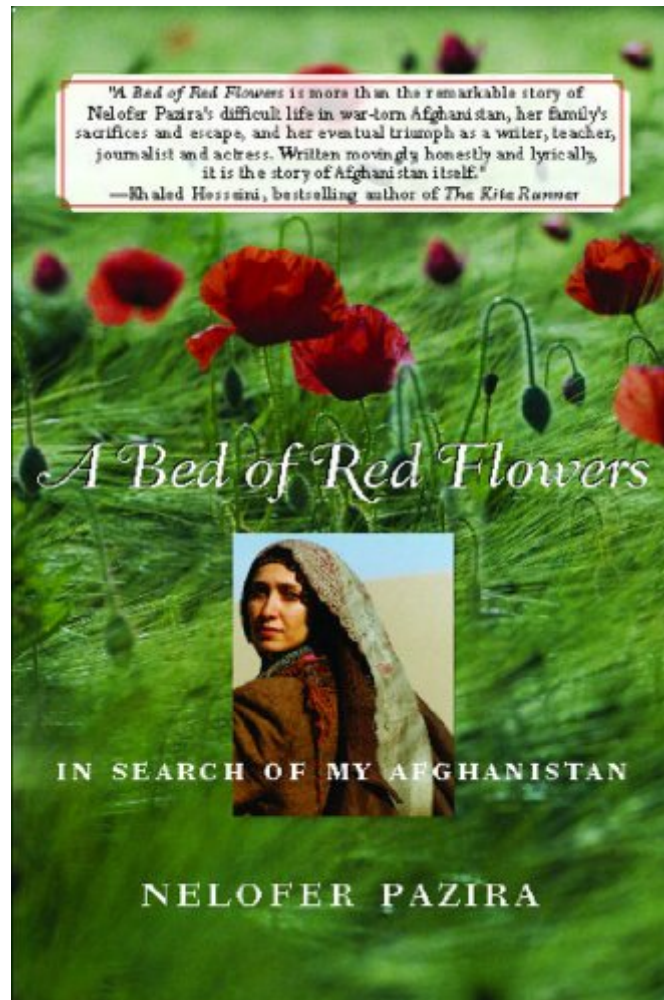




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A Bed Of Red Flowers: In Search Of My Afghanistan



Synopsis

Written with compassion, intelligence and insight, *A Bed of Red Flowers* is a profoundly moving portrait of life under occupation and the unforgettable story of a family, a people and a country. "The picnic of the red flower" is a traditional time of celebration for Afghans. One of Nelofer Pazira's earliest memories is of people gathering in the countryside to admire the tulips and poppies carpeting the landscape. It is the mid-1970s, and her parents are building a future for themselves and their young children in the city of Kabul. But when Nelofer is just five the Communists take power and her father, a respected doctor, is imprisoned along with thousands of other Afghans. The following year, the Russians invade Afghanistan, which becomes a police state and the center of a bloody conflict between the Soviet army and American-backed mujahidin fighters. A climate of violence and fear reigns. For Nelofer, there is no choice but to grow up fast. At eleven, she and her friends throw stones at the Russian tanks that stir up dust and animosity in the streets of Kabul. As a teenager she joins a resistance group, hiding her gun from her parents. Her emotional refuge is her friendship with her classmate Dyana, with whom she shares a passion for poetry, dreams and a better life. After a decade of war, Nelofer's family escapes across the mountains to Pakistan and later to Canada, where she continues to write to Dyana. When her friend suddenly stops writing, Nelofer fears for Dyana's life. With lyrical, narrative prose, *A Bed of Red Flowers* movingly tells Pazira's haunting story, as well as Afghanistan's story as a nation.

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Customer Reviews

Were we able to provide fractional ratings, this book would merit 4 1/2 stars. It is beautifully and sensitively written and exudes credibility. I have more than passing familiarity with this region of the world and her story is completely consistent with my own understanding and experience. Nelofer relates the story of her family's journey spiritually, politically, emotionally and geographically from pre-Communist Kabul to democratic Canada via "indeterminately governed" Pakistan. It also describes her return to the region to make a film about life there. Clearly related are excesses both in the Communist system and in a radical Islamic dominated system. The overland journey they take in response to the oppressive Communist government in Afghanistan is a remarkable piece of storytelling. Some western readers may find certain parts of the book what they consider a "stretch" but I firmly believe that is due to cultural difference and not to the author's credibility. In other words, most westerners cannot imagine the eastern response to certain situations. Without being trite, cliché, or "preachy" this book clearly demonstrates what the courageous people of Central Asia are dealing with and what a blessing it is to live in a democratic society however imperfect that society sometimes is. I highly recommend it.

Nelofer Pazira's elegy for her family and her ruined nation make for compelling reading. Very highly recommended for anyone seeking deeper knowledge of this once-beautiful place and its people, people very much like anyone reading it.

I bought this for a school project. Good value and condition. I enjoyed the book as well. Truly touching story.

Loved it!!! Everyone should read it to comprehend what is happening in that part of our world. Very touching personal story.

This is one of the most eloquent books I have read in a while. Nelofer succeeds in writing about the

tragic topic of Afghanistan with much grace and insight. I found her perspectives to be thought-provoking and refreshing on the subject of Afghanistan: it's wars, it's people and it's history. One of the best books I have read in a long, long time.

Nelofer Pazira was raised in an Afghan home during turbulent times. Her father was a doctor who had been raised in poverty; her mother a university educated teacher from a wealthy family. They dressed in European styles and could have enjoyed a wonderful, privileged, peaceful life were it not for the place they were born and the times they lived in. Nelofer's story of growing up in Afghanistan is riveting. Time and again, I would re-read a paragraph absolutely astonished that this beautiful woman lived this life and suffered through these horrors and yet can tell this story with beauty and clarity and grace. She tells of visiting her father in prison at a young age, a scene that strengthened her resolve and planted a seed of strength in this young girl. I was moved learning from her what it was like living in a country divided by war and terror during the Russian invasion. Her attempts to fight the Communists by joining revolutionary resistant groups and the story of her family's eventual escape to Canada via Pakistan are gripping. Her eye for detail and her incredible grasp of the conflicting power struggles of Communism, the Taliban, the U.S., and the succession of various leaders of the country show a depth of intelligence and courage few can aspire to. Nelofer is a woman of substance who we can learn much from, and I think we will hear more from her in the future. The parallel threads that she weaves, or that I read into this story of life in a country at war and the hatred felt by the people in that country for the invaders sent chills down my spine since there are Nelofer's right now within Iraq - living a life much like hers yet in this case we are the invaders. Nelofer continues the story by returning to Afghanistan to try to find her lost friend Dyana as well as traveling to Russia to interview the men who invaded her country - fascinating and remarkable.

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