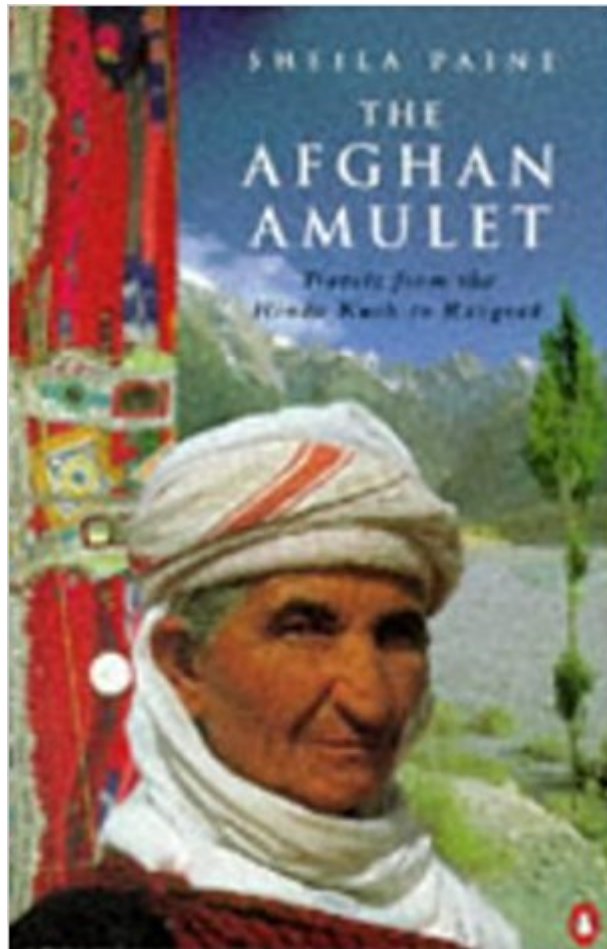




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The Afghan Amulet: Travels From The Hindu Kush To Razgrad



Synopsis

New

Book Information

Paperback: 304 pages

Publisher: PENGUIN; New Ed edition (1995)

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New

As a previously unpublished author I didn't expect much from this book by Ms. Paine therefore I was quite surprised to find it articulate and interesting. Although I have no interest in or knowledge of embroidery, it was not a large part of the book and was easily digestible when encountered. Even if one finds this book a tedious read, they must have great respect and admiration for the author to undertake such a journey in an extremely hostile and, to say the least, uncomfortable part of the world.

This meandering travelogue is theoretically framed by the author's quest to discover the provenance of a particular style of embroidered amulet, but doesn't really hold together well. Paine is a multi-lingual expert on embroidery who recounts her four trips, encompassing regions in India, Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, Turkey, Iraq, and finally Bulgaria, in her attempt to track down the source of the amulet. While she is decent in giving local color and impression, she is awful at conveying the progress of her quest. When she does manage to talk to someone who knows something, the conversation is presented as a series of incomprehensible non-sequiturs. It's best to skim over anything about the textiles, for what is more interesting is her experience as a 62-year old

English woman traveling solo through some rather dicey areas at the time of the Gulf War and the new independence of Afghanistan (which is the only country where she is assaulted).

Ms Paine is a thoughtful and even heroic travel writer. As a woman of 60 traveling alone through some of the parts of the world hostile to women (e.g. Pakistan, Iran) somehow she manages to report with deep understanding and delicate humor. A great read.

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