



## The Poppy Field Diary

*Carey Richard*

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## **The Poppy Field Diary** Carey Richard

Afghanistan was a beautiful land until greed and ambition pillaged its fertile valleys. She was beautiful too. Betrayed and broken, she journeyed through forty years of nomadic longing as her picturesque village disintegrated along with her hope. Unlike her beloved land, she at last discovered her place of rest.

Hers is a story for everyone who has ever loved. We dream, we hope, and we fall in love, only to hurt the thing we cherish most. But a few rare and beautiful souls survive that lonely journey through the minefields of passion to discover intimacy, kindness, and forgiveness.

## **The Poppy Field Diary Details**

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Author : Carey Richard

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# **From Reader Review The Poppy Field Diary for online ebook**

## **Elena Alvarez Dosil says**

I was provided a free copy of this book in audio format from the author in exchange for an honest review.

This book narrates the life of a woman in Afghanistan. She is the daughter of an atypical marriage, since her father was French. Her mother has inculcated on her the value of love and this will be the goal for this woman. This is a book about dreams, hope and love.

The story starts in the 60's, when this woman meets her future husband Emir, and she dreams of how her life will become. Things start to get complicated for Afghanistan and this woman, and her search for true love will only lead to broken dreams. Only in accepting what she has got she will find new hope.

This is one of the most beautiful books I have read this year, and my favorite so far. The story is beautifully told, with many flashbacks and enough background information. It is narrated in first person and we often suffer about how life is treating her. Born of a mixed marriage, she got a glimpse into the Western culture, and her dreams will not fit in her own culture reality. For us it may seem a foreign world, but we see that in her own heart it is also for her.

But this is not only this woman's story, but also about her country. We witness the changes in Afghanistan in the last 40 years, and how the land gets broken and how things change under different rulers. Carey Richard has written a wonderful piece of history along with a story about love, grief and loss.

There is no name given to the woman in this story because the book is written in first person like a personal diary, and in fact, this could have been the story of any woman in Afghanistan, despite her different origins.

The narrations was also beautifully done. Susanna Burney really becomes this Afghan woman, and her subtle accent makes it believable. It would have been a five star narration if it were not for the occasional mouth clicking noises that could have been edited out.

I really enjoyed this book and how it was narrated. I would recommend it to anyone who likes a well written book with the added value of an extraordinary narration.

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## **Julie Mills says**

I loved this touching story of love and forgiveness. Carey does a remarkable job of making history come to life by giving readers one woman's personal view of life in Afghanistan--a place Westerners really know very little about. I'm looking forward to the next novel!

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## **Leigh Anne Kincaid says**

I loved this book! Beautiful, poetic prose. The story of Afghan couple is very compelling and holds your interest until the very end. Highly recommended.

\*I received a copy of this book through Goodreads First Reads giveaway.

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## Aditi says

*"True forgiveness is when you can say, "Thank you for that experience."*

----Oprah Winfrey

Carey Richard, an American author, pens a heart-touching story, *The Poppy Field Diary* about an Afghan woman and her journey through marriage against all odds in a land of terror and narrow-mindedness.

### Synopsis:

*Sometimes it takes a moment*

*Sometimes it takes a lifetime*

*Sometimes a lifetime is not enough*

*In the days before the Russian occupation, Kabul's golden age, a tenacious young Afghan woman began a journey that we all take at some point in our lives the journey to forgive. In an unyielding land, she discovered the grace that is within every heart.*

*As JFK floundered in the Cuban missile crisis, she fell in love. As the United States withdrew from Vietnam, her oldest son trained for the buzkashi, the wild game of Afghan polo brought to her country by Genghis Khan. As the Russians invaded Afghanistan, her husband ran guns and opium through the Khyber Pass; as they retreated, she matched wits with a beautiful Czech spy. As the Taliban ravaged Kabul, she cared for a wounded bacha bereesh, an Afghan dancing boy. As the Twin Towers burned, she found true intimacy.*

A nameless Afghan girl is seen playing by the fields whose only support is her mother. Her only identity of her father was that of a photo from which she could conclude that he was a French man. But falling in love against her country's rules is something puts her into a different track where she believes that romance has disillusioned her life. From a cheating husband to jihad sons, this Afghan's woman life moves parallelly along with some greatest historical events of the world from collapse of the Soviet Union to the rise of Taliban to the attack on World Trade Center.

The writing is fantastic and from the very first page, I was pulled into the heart of this story. Yeah, in the beginning, it might sound like another Khaled Hosseini novel, but trust me, it is something very different and unique from Hosseini's Kabul stories. The prose is lyrical and poetic and each chapter ends on a poetic note. Moreover, there is a lot of mystery that keeps us engaged into the storyline. I liked how the author intertwined both history and the Afghan woman's journey through marriage parallelly, and each occurrence in the history has some impact in her life too.

The portrait of Afghanistan is vivid and striking. The picturesque backdrop in this novel not only soothes our eyes and minds but also transports us to this land of beauty and terror. The story is narrated in such a way that it seems like everything is unfolding right in front of our eyes. The author has captured not only the beauty of this land, but also its culture, food, people and streets so lively and brightly in his book. We see the story from this Afghan woman's eyes, though she narrates her sad story, but the author gives us enough space to see it with our own POV. The plot is layered with some deep emotions that are easy to contemplate with. The poems just at the end of the chapters are beautiful and let us feel about the character more deeply.

The characterization is also pretty strong enough.

Overall it's an emotional and personal account of an Afghan woman and her story about love, betrayal and forgiveness.

**Verdict:** *An enchanting yet heart-wrenching storyline that is bound to keep turning the pages of this book.*

**Courtesy:** *Thanks to Goodreads for choosing me as a winner in Goodreads First Reads Program.*

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## Shana Nichols says

\*Received as a Goodreads giveaway\*

I expected to enjoy *The Poppy Field Diary* much more than I actually did, which was disappointing. The cultural narrative and stories about the experiences of the protagonist and her family throughout the past decade were highly compelling, beautiful and heartbreaking. The story of her marriage, less so. The prose felt overly saccharine and histrionic in a way that took away from the stark stripped down pain and intensity of her emotions. Rather than allowing the feelings themselves to speak, the prose seemed to bury their rawness.

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## M.E. says

*The Poppy Field Diary* shares the intimate story of an Afghanistan woman who, amidst the traditional world of Afghanistan, found solace in her poppy field where she could walk unveiled and dream about her future. She carried with her a diary weathered with age. It was her father's before it was hers and knowing he carried it with him gave her comfort. Her father was a foreigner to this country, but he loved her mother and her mother loved him and she often wondered how life would have been if her father hadn't died. She could tell from the stories her mother shared that their love was true. It was these stories that helped to form her views about love. A view she carried with her when she met and married a young gentleman by the name of Amir. It was a view she began to question when life became complicated with family, rivalries, war, and deception. She tried to cling to her hope that love would endure, but found that it had to begin within her. Could she bring herself to forgive and learn to love unconditionally?

I was drawn into the story written by Carey Richard. Although the name of the woman we read about in *The Poppy Field Diary* is never disclosed, she becomes a friend to the reader. We discover her intimate thoughts, her dreams, her failures, and her desires: bringing us closer to her and the story she shares with us.

Throughout the life of the protagonist, we are given glimpses of the history of Afghanistan and the country's political battles. This was the area I was concerned about when I first read the synopsis of the book. I had no need to worry though. The author did a wonderful job of intertwining the history into the story. It was subtle, yet informative, and it didn't overpower the personal story being told. It was also a necessary addition since Amir's livelihood was smuggling guns and supplies to the faction he supported.

The book's chapter titles reflect the topic or the emotion about to unfold in the upcoming chapter. When the chapter comes to an end, a poem is shared with the reader summarizing the main character's feelings about

the events that just occurred. There are over 30 chapters in this book, which gives you a hint as to the many different emotions our central character went through and the multiple subjects the book covers: Isolate, Unworthy, Lonely (these are just a few I mention for reference, but there are so many more to explore when you read the book).

In the back of the book there is a glossary of words and terms used in the story which are helpful if you are not familiar with them. It also provides a brief history of the situations covered in the book.

I found *The Poppy Field Diary* to be a delightful reading journey. It followed the entire lifespan of the main character and I liked how the supporting characters were revealed through the eyes of the main character. It was from her thoughts and from her recollection of certain events that you learned more about the other people mentioned in the book. As if you were having a conversation with her about her life and those she encountered during her journey, learning more about them through her tales and recollections.

Due to the sexual content and the war conditions shared in the book, I would suggest the reader be 18 or over. Those who are interested in Afghan culture would enjoy this book. It's not a romance novel, but if you like romance entwined in your story, you'll want to read this book. I also think the story is balanced enough for both men and women readers.

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## **Kelley says**

Received novel courtesy of Goodreads.com giveaway

A powerful novel that connects the life of one woman to her deepest self and to her country. This novel needs to be read by women who feel like no one else in the world has ever felt like they do. We first meet her as a young girl and grow with her during her lifetime. She experiences the feelings that all women experience: mainly all feeling to do with our worthiness. While we go through her life with her, we also see Afghanistan and how the country ended up in Taliban hands.

I found this novel to be so full of truths that I must read it again. I will definitely be passing it along to others.

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## **September Williams says**

I won the *Poppy Field Diary* in a Goodreads Romance Audiobook Giveaway. Because the delivery of the prose by the narrator was so eloquent I bought the ebook and reread it without the bias of the audio voice -- Guess what? It stands up in print as well as in audio! A version of this review is also on Amazon.

When I was halfway through the book, I was stunned by the lushness and beauty. I was absorbing it as I would an old uncle reading the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam after lunch, and before nap, on a warm summer day by the sea--begging it not to end -- I sent a note to the Author, Carey Richard, saying so. For me it became a slow read -- because I did not want it to end. I didn't want to devour the meal but savor it. I listened to a chapter every few days usually while doing something outside.

It was smooth and easy -- until it wasn't. But the new phase was just as moving, The mounting tensions of a

lush romance entangled with the politics of the near east region of the Farsi world during the final decades of the 20th century served as a preamble to current times.

A smart woman's character winds us through the joys and the tragedy of one of the worlds most contested regions-- then and now. It is a braided narrative of families bound by marriage and nations thrown asunder by burgeoning violence. When I got to the point where I needed to know who would win -- the young heroine that we had known since she was a child playing in "her poppy field," before marriage, before war-- I was overwhelm with my own hope for her.

This is a book for people who love to love and love to think -- I give it my highest recommendation.

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## **Home Is Where the Wine Is Book Blog says**

### **My Rating: 5 out of 5 Stars**

Move over ladies. This man knows how to write romance! Compelling...beautiful...emotional...one of the best books I've had the pleasure of reading all year!

The writing is absolutely breathtaking. Carey takes you on a journey that you will never want to be over. I consumed this book in a little over a day and it's not a light read people. Half romance, half history lesson. You can tell the author is very educated in the Afghan culture. I loved the poems at the end of each chapter.

This is a story of love, betrayal, forgiveness and falling in love again. This is a very difficult in-depth review to write so please bare with me.

1962, in the midst of Afghanistan's golden era was a young girl that spent her days lounging in the poppy fields reading her books. That's where she was truly the happiest, where she was truly at peace, that is where she found love.

*I wanted to run, but was afraid. I wanted to call to him but was ashamed. I wanted him to call to me but prayed he would not. I felt a peculiar pounding in my breast, and my face warmed in*

*a startled flush. I hid behind a tree, begging God to send him away and hoping God would not hear my prayer. And suddenly he stood before me, smiling gazing intently. He kept a respectful distance and said in a gentle voice, "Hello, little one."*

*I called him my husband before I even knew his name.*

Her mother was her confidant and her best friend. After her father died she was the one that educated her and shared her wisdom.

*"The terror of love," she said. "Love is an wild and untamed beast that will frighten but fascinate you. It will tear you apart and make you strong It will hold you captive and set you free. It is something to fear and something to embrace. It will destroy you or make you into something that you never thought you could be. It is the greatest risk of life and the greatest reward. Yes, it is terrifying."*

Admir was kind and loving. They immediately fell madly in love and wed soon after. She was only seventeen, a virgin as was custom, she moved to her husbands compound where they raised horses. She missed her mother so but quickly became friends with her mother in law. Time passed and she bared him three sons. The boys were nurtured and loved by their mother but as soon as they were old enough her husband forced them into the world of horses and weapons. She resented him for taking their youth away from them.

Fast forward a few years when the Russians invaded Afghanistan. Her husband started selling weapons, opium and horses to both sides. He became a very powerful and wealthy man in the process and moved them to their own compound in Kapul.



She felt she was slowly losing the man she fell in love with and the man she called husband was becoming a stranger. While the war rages on she learns of her husband's betrayal. She is left feeling inadequate, distraught, angry, sad, confused...

*No knife cuts as deep as the one held in the hand of a lover, I thought. The wound of a lover is fatal. There is no recovery from such a wound. And the accusing voices quieted. As my husband sank into his own dark well of sorrow. I struggled to resolve my wordless contradictions. There is no one left to forgive an unfaithful lover, I thought. Because the one that must forgive is dead and she is forgotten.*

With one son in the war and the other two sent to safety with relatives in Pakistan she is faced with the fact that she is alone and bitter. Unable to forgive, she is but a mere shell of her once vibrant former self. Forced to live with a man that doesn't love her in a place that is not her home.

As the years pass, she finds solitude in her garden and books and wants very much to rid her heart of bitterness and learn to forgive and love her husband again.

*It felt wrong to feel ashamed but I felt ashamed. I felt ashamed that I had abandoned hope. I felt ashamed that I had slapped him that day in the car as we drove through the battlefield. I was torn between my constant smoldering anger and my desire to move past my hurt. My heart was ripped into two pieces. And one piece said I hate you for what you did to me, while the other piece said I want to forgive you, and I want you back again and I want to love you.*

A savior came to her in the form of a very sick thirteen year old dancing boy that had an badly infected amputated leg. She nursed him back to health and he soon became very special to her. She taught him how to read and about books and about her travels and the world. He made her laugh. He made her feel alive. When her husband was traveling they would spend there days working in the garden and their nights reading out loud. She felt he was the son she never got to have.

Meanwhile while the Taliban started taking a stronghold on the country she was living safely behind her compound walls. She missed her poppy fields fiercely, she missed her youth and her husband.

*I was grateful for all the things my husband had provided for me. I knew he did those things out of love. But I longed not just for an ordered world. I longed for an ordered heart. I wish he could bring order to our troubled past.*

In 2001 the year the Taliban bombed the World Trade Center she became ill. She returned with her husband to her beloved poppy fields. Now an old woman. It was during that time that she got to finally feel true forgiveness. It was during those long winter months that she finally fell in love.

One final note the appendix was truly amazing and unexpected. This book is recommended for anyone that has ever loved. Anyone that ever wants to fall in love and anyone that has ever truly forgiven someone and found love again.

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### **booknerd\_dork says**

Wow.. Just wow, I don't know what to say. It's really beautiful and the way it is written I just wasn't reading it, I was living in those moments like a ghost from outside. The journey of the lady and especially when she recalled her mother, I am just speechless. And I know I'm going to re-read this book many times.

Love it!!! When the first night after reading, I thought about the book and noticed that I don't even know her name and I didn't notice it earlier but it was never needed. But I'm curious :P

The writing just flowed and I didn't even know when I swept away with it. It's a definite read and I'm even forcing my friends to read it, I just want them also to know and feel the same things and discuss about it. A Definite Must Must Read!!!

\*I was given the copy of the book in exchange of an honest review.\*

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### **Suzanne says**

I thought the back story of the history and culture of Afghanistan during the recent wars was very interesting and absorbing. The story of the marriage, betrayal, and return of the husband did not ring true to me as a woman. For the entire book, the husband was self-serving, deceitful, and emotionally and physically abusive. The wife whined a little too much and too long about her betrayal and I cheered when she finally was able to let go and forgive him. It was too much of a stretch for me to believe that he could return and make such a transformation at the end. I understood it better when I saw the author was a man. The viewpoint was then of a man's version of what he thought a woman was thinking about a marriage gone south. The relationship was messy throughout the book. Attempting to neatly tie up all the loose ends was simply not believable for me. A man writing in a woman's voice is not believable, either.

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## **Marcie Mote says**

I am a friend of the author but had no idea he was such a gifted writer. This book is very touching down to the very soul. From the very first page, I felt as if I were the main character, the Afghan woman who was seeking more intimacy and love from her husband, because she tells the story from the depths of her emotions and heart. The story is all about love, emotion, regrets, forgiveness, and tenderness. I was drawn in from the very first page and could not put down this book.

It is a moving story, wrapping you into the culture of Afghanistan. The story moves quickly and is captivating. My heart ached during parts of the story line and at other times it soared high. Forgiveness is usually a hard thing to do, especially when you feel love tugging at your heart strings. But, this book will give you fresh insight into the steps to forgive somebody who has hurt you deeply. You will not regret reading this book. Get ready to be drawn into the story and to delve into your own hurts and regrets.

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## **K3 says**

### **4.5 Stars**

This story is about the journey of an Afghan woman we meet as a young girl. I loved being able to grow with her. Experiencing her cultural and the world events from her perspective. The self-discovery, the love, the emotions, regrets. Learning to forgive and wondering your true worth.

Being able to see Afghanistan was great. I liked being able to get a look into their culture. One we never get to see, especially from this kind of perspective. It was intriguing to see how the country fell into the hands of the Taliban.

The journey is beautiful and heartbreaking. Seeing things from the woman's point of view. Her deepest desires, her secrets, her hurt, her peace and her happiness. I

Richard Carey did a wonderful job in his writing. I will admit, this story was difficult to read at times but in the end it was just so beautiful and moving. The story just sucked you in and it flowed. The poetry used was perfect at the end of each chapter.

This is a must read if you are looking for something different, enlightening and educational.

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## **Bev says**

### **Interesting on so Many Levels**

I had the privilege to read a pre-release copy. I know the author so take my review with a tiny grain of salt. I feel I can be objective.

This book appealed to me on a number of levels. I usually read thrillers and I enjoy good mystery so this was a little outside my typical read. But it held my attention from cover to cover. Well developed characters, captivating story line, and beautifully written.

The Afghan woman's point of view was enlightening but her experience was one that any woman could relate to. What kept my interest most, though, were the thoughtful passages on love and affection. This is so much more than a story. It's emotional, insightful and very moving. It's not one of those books you rush through but neither does it bog down or become tedious. I found myself savoring many of the passages and the main character stayed with me long after I had finished.

I especially enjoyed the non-fiction appendix on forgiveness. I thought that was a little unusual at first but it helped me understand the book's message. Even the glossary was interesting. The author obviously put a great deal of research into this book and drew from his personal experiences. It made the story all the more believable. This is about a 300 page book so it's satisfying, but I did find myself wanting a bit more.

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## **Melinda says**

### **Nice Story**

This is not my genre, I don't read women's lit, so some of the overriding messages that are continuously remarked upon are a bit much for me. This author clearly had an agenda when writing this novel. The writing was rather simple but beautiful - evoking images of nature, romantic scenes and camaraderie.

The four main repeating themes

Love

Betrayal

Hope

Forgiveness

While I have nothing against romance, or lack of romance, we went through the same cycle multiple times. She is told she must find a way to forgive for her own sake. She agonized over it. It solves nothing. She boils inside with her anger and feelings of betrayal. Rinse and repeat multiple times. You don't have to hit me in the head with a hammer. I get it.

I was more interested in the Afghan historic details surrounding the story and how they changed the lives of the characters. These facts were downplayed in favor of the state of the love relationship at any given moment. This is not really a historical romance. This is the story of one woman's journey from romantic fantasy to romantic love to betrayal to forgiveness and true intimacy, all in a world ruled by husband's, father's, brother's and uncle's.

This is a novel about love and forgiving loved ones who have betrayed us. If that sounds good to you, by all means, read it. It has won numerous awards.

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