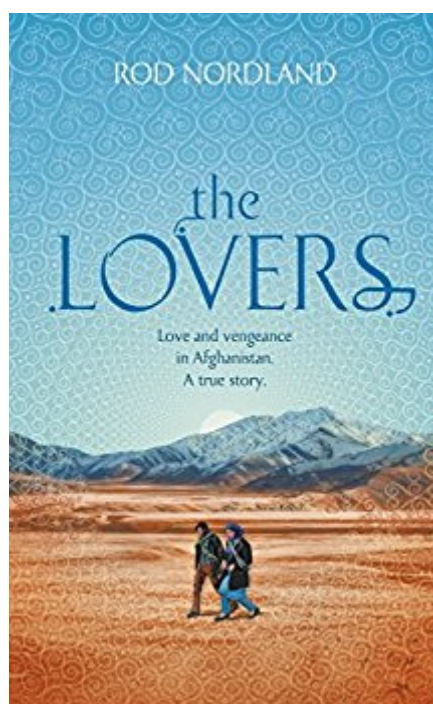


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# The Lovers



## Synopsis

'...a heartbreaking tale of illicit love and religious persecution. Rod Nordland seamlessly weaves the personal and the political in urgent, effortless prose to tell a story that is not only beautifully written but also vitally important for our times.' Amanda Foreman, Chair of the Man Booker Prize

A riveting, real-life equivalent of *The Kite Runner*: A powerful and profoundly moving story of a young couple willing to risk everything for love. "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.

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