



On Wings of a Lion

Susan Wakeford Angard

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On Wings of a Lion is an exciting historical romance set during the Iranian Revolution.

Susan Wakeford Angard's thrilling historical romance *On Wings of a Lion* unfolds amid heart-pumping action in revolutionary Iran.

In 1978, feisty, athletic Hollywood filmmaker Kathryn Whitney is courageous, bold, confident, and sometimes reckless. Those qualities helped her to accomplish great things, but they also almost cost her her life on multiple occasions. Now, she sees a chance to direct a commercial in Iran as her last hope of salvaging her career. Haunted by her controlling ex-husband and past failures, she fights to win the plum assignment from his production company—only to discover that her film location is descending into chaos.

Kathryn's key contact in Iran is supposed to be Sir Anthony Evans at the Ministry of Culture. Evans—half Iranian, half British—is a wealthy playboy who's favored by the Shah's inner circle and who's revealed not to be as shallow as presumed. He is detained while flying rescue missions for families targeted by rebel death squads.

When Evans fails to meet Kathryn's crew at the airport, she is irritated and misplaces her trust in a man working against the Shah's government and her project. What starts as a struggle to complete her film project on schedule and within a tight budget turns into unexpected passion, treachery, and a fight for her life.

The story opens with pulsating action that draws a stark contrast between the life-or-death drama of Evans's narrow escape and the superficial interpretation of survival in Hollywood. The location of Kathryn's project results in an enthralling and tangled web of intrigue and conflicting motives, and the drama never lets up.

A large cast of characters—from the film crew to members of Evans's family with ties to a splinter sect of the secret police—are drawn with unique personalities, foibles, and physical characteristics. While some appear to be allies, they are not, and their simmering resentments threaten Kathryn and Evans's efforts to complete the film, not to mention their lives. Old wounds, hidden secrets, and misconceptions mean that their resentments grow as the couple's mutual attraction becomes known and the political situation becomes more unstable.

Moments of passion, unnerving flashes of violence, and compelling scenes of action, danger, and pathos are sometimes overemphasized, and their conveyance detracts from the initial impact of the scenes. Evans and Kathryn's budding love begins with lust, and at first, their depth of feeling exceeds what events justify. As they grow to admire one another's creative talents and share experiences fighting a common enemy, their union develops in an appropriate way.

Iran comes alive through descriptions of its scents, sounds, and climate: “The noise of workers clanging brass and rolling open carpets while they haggled over the price of wares met the smells of tobacco, mint, and food.” Apt headlines, decor, and fashions capture the era, and the result is a vibrant story that conveys the nation’s volatility and the challenges of choosing among unsavory options in times of crisis.

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WENDY HINMAN (August 13, 2019)

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