

The Persian Glories

Susan Wakeford Angard

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The Persian Glories is an action-packed historical novel in which a woman unleashes chaos during her pursuit of extraordinary jewels.

In Susan Wakeford Angard's thrilling historical novel *The Persian Glories*, a woman goes to great lengths to possess a set of priceless gems.

Rena thought she had won her one-sided rivalry with her sister Ilya when she married the Iranian prime minister. But then Ilya married an English nobleman, and the shah gave the couple the Persian Glories, priceless diamonds that Rena covets. As a result, Rena's resentment and obsession reaches new heights.

Over twenty years later, in the aftermath of the Iranian Revolution, Rena relies on her son Mirdad to take the jewels from Ilya's son Anthony. But when the Persian Glories end up in England in the possession of Anthony's fiancée Kathryn, international intrigue ensues.

Though the story is told from the alternating perspectives of Anthony, Kathryn, Mirdad, and Rena, Rena is its defining force. Her characterization strains credulity: she's a stereotype of a jealous and angry woman, undergoes numerous plastic surgeries, has a long-term extramarital affair, and nurses murderous jealousy of younger and more beautiful women. Further, Rena takes these traits to extreme lengths; whether directly or through Mirdad, she is responsible for most of the novel's tragedies and difficulties across decades and continents.

Though the novel includes a rush of events and people in its beginning portions, it lags after their introduction. It invests itself in highlighting the chaos that accompanies a revolution, but the result is hectic; elements of the opening only make sense later on in the book. Further, a number of the referenced events occur off of the page, as with Rena's plastic surgeries, and are discussed without sufficient context.

Emotional confrontations pile up near the book's ending, but with varying results. Anthony and Mirdad's first encounter after Anthony was presumed dead is exciting, while Rena and Kathryn's confrontation following a kidnapping is underwhelming; Anthony and Mirdad's conflicted feelings make their roiling emotions involving, whereas Rena's extreme hatred of Kathryn is too melodramatic. There are also inconsistencies, as with the revelation of a pregnancy that's played as a surprise, though another character observed it before. Misspellings, punctuation errors, and run-on sentences further impede the story, though its conclusion—during which one of Rena's earliest crimes is returned to—is thrilling.

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CAROLINA CIUCCI (December 7, 2022)

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