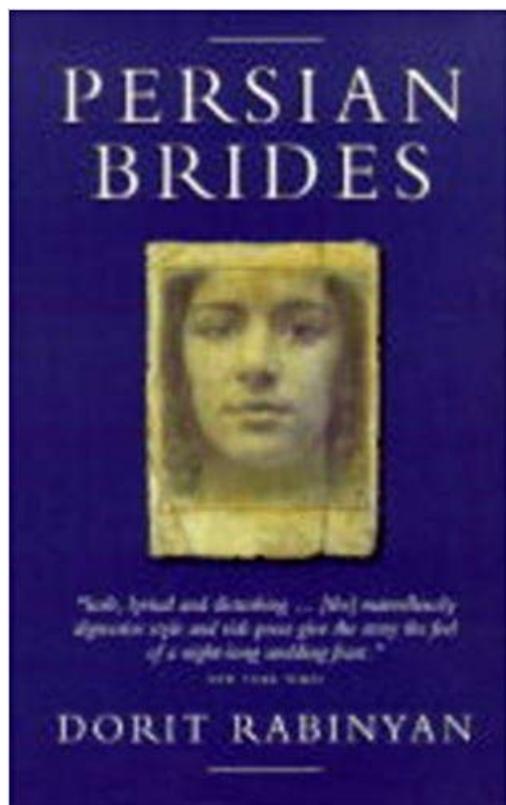


Persian Brides *by* Dorit Rabinyan



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Written with a unique blend of humour and compassion, *Persian Brides* explores the lives of two young Jewish girls in a Persian village at the turn of the century. The framework plot spans two days in the lives of eleven-year-old Nazie and fifteen-year-old Flora. Nazie has long been engaged to her cousin Moussa and anxiously awaits their marriage. By law, they cannot marry until she begins menstruating. Flora, by contrast, is married, pregnant and seemingly abandoned. Rabinyan's powers of description are astonishing. She creates a cast of characters brimming with vitality, and a village whose odours, colours and textures float effortlessly off the page. The result is one of the freshest and most accomplished first novels of recent years - a vibrant, tragi-comic and stunningly rich novel that resonates at every turn.



Reviews of the *Persian Brides* *by* Dorit Rabinyan

Dammy

The author writes in the passionate old world Iranian interpretation of life in a Jewish community among women. The time is set over a hundred or more years ago and women live according to the dictates of their men and ancient Jewish superstitions.

FreandlyMan

Difficult and not interesting

melody of you

Persian Brides was a book unlike any other I've ever read. It tells the story of the Persian village of Omerijan; and details the story of the young women specifically the young Jewish women who live in it as they are born, go through childhood; get married and have their own children. The style of writing was very descriptive and open; it could almost be called provocative in some ways. There were no details left to the imagination; all of the girls sexual experiences growing up and all of the customs that the women and men in the village observed were very specifically detailed in the book; so if that type of thing bothers you as a reader then I would be careful with this book also I would not recommend anyone under the age of fourteen reading it.

It took awhile for me to get into the writer's tempo with how things were described but once I did I ended up loving this book and finishing it very quickly. I learned a lot I didn't know about customs in a different part of the world, marriage rituals, spiritual beliefs, and I loved the style of writing. The characters in the book were very easy to relate to and the chapters ended in a way that made you want to keep reading. The book centered mainly around the lives of two girls named Flora and Nazie, and their families lives in Omerijan; their entry into married life at the ages of between eleven and fourteen. And their loyalty to each other. I would recommend this book to anyone who likes a bit of magic woven into the books they read and who wants a book that is hard to put down; but don't read it if you can't handle parts that are very truthful about the realities of life for women in this time and part of the world.

Kifer

For 200 pages Rabinyan creates a delightful if not exciting Jewish - Muslim village in Persia with old world customs - people ward off devils with superstitions, spy on their neighbors and generally get along. Homa is married and living with her husband, Flora is married and deserted by her husband, little Nazie wants to be married. Good stories can be made of less. The pace is leisurely. And then it is as if the publisher reminded the author that a manuscript was due in two weeks, and not knowing how to tie things together Rabinyan turns to magic to account for one character. As if that would be acceptable. And then the author got a frantic call that the text was due today, and Rabinyan put a period at the end of a random sentence and handed in 236 pages. Completed because time was out, but not because anything was resolved, or even interesting questions left open. It just comes to a crashing halt. Rabinyan is not the only author to not know how to end a story, but this is one of the bigger let-downs after a good set-up I have been subjected to in a while. Nice writing style, but below average in overall worthiness. Her next book, OUR WEDDINGS, is in a similar vein but with a much better closure.

Ceroelyu

"Persian Brides" is the first novel by Israeli-born Dorit Rabinyan. Rabinyan was only 21 at the time that she wrote the book. The novel won the 1999 JEWISH QUARTERLY Wingate Literary Award. "Persian Brides" takes the reader to a fictional Persian village in the early 1900's. The story focuses on 15 year old Flora, her 11 year old cousin Nazie, and their family, the Hanoums. Flora, is a headstrong girl, with perhaps a bit too much vanity. She rejects many suitors that come to her family proposing marriage. Nazie, who is treated like a servant by her aunt (Flora's mother), sees all this activity and longs to be married herself. The novel is full of culture and folklore and it was very interesting to read about the traditions and rituals that the family followed. The writing was beautiful and full of great imagery. I feel that the book would have been better with a touch more character and plot development. We read this book in my book group and there were mixed feelings on it. Some people didn't like it at all due to the limited plot and others enjoyed the writing and the magical imagery. I personally, love reading about other cultures and their traditions, folklore, superstitions and beliefs, so I found that aspect of this book very satisfying. One example of an interesting tradition in Flora's village is that mothers shout from the rooftop to let the neighborhood know when their daughter has their first menstruation. Flora's mother also performs nighttime inspections of Flora to be sure that she is still 'pure'. Can you imagine?! And you thought your mother was bad! The novel will make you smile at some of the other traditions and superstitions that Flora and her family live by.

Bumand

This novel traces the experiences and yearnings of two Jewish Persian girls in turn of the century Iran, and as such is rich, animated, humorous, engaging and sensual.

Flora is 15 and pregnant, waiting for her worthless straying husband to return home. Nazie is eleven and longs to be married and start a family.

A masterpiece of contemporary literature in the tradition of Amy Tan and Shifra Horn. It vividly covers the sights, sounds, smells and feelings of the characters and the culture of Persian Jews. Set over two days, it succeeds in backtracking to cover the experiences of more than one generation. Richly explores the superstitions, customs and traditions of the Jews of Persia and Persia at the beginning of the Twentieth century.

Ricep

Ms Rabinyan can certainly write fresh phrases, and I imagined her sitting at her desk with a dictionary of Iranian/Jewish folklore joyfully churning out page after page of weird and colorful practices. Unfortunately, it overwhelmed the characters, they seemed flat and uninteresting. There was just too much craziness going on. I do appreciate magical realism, but this was way over the top.

In the future, I might like to take a look at her poetry.

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